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MASQUE OF CULTURE

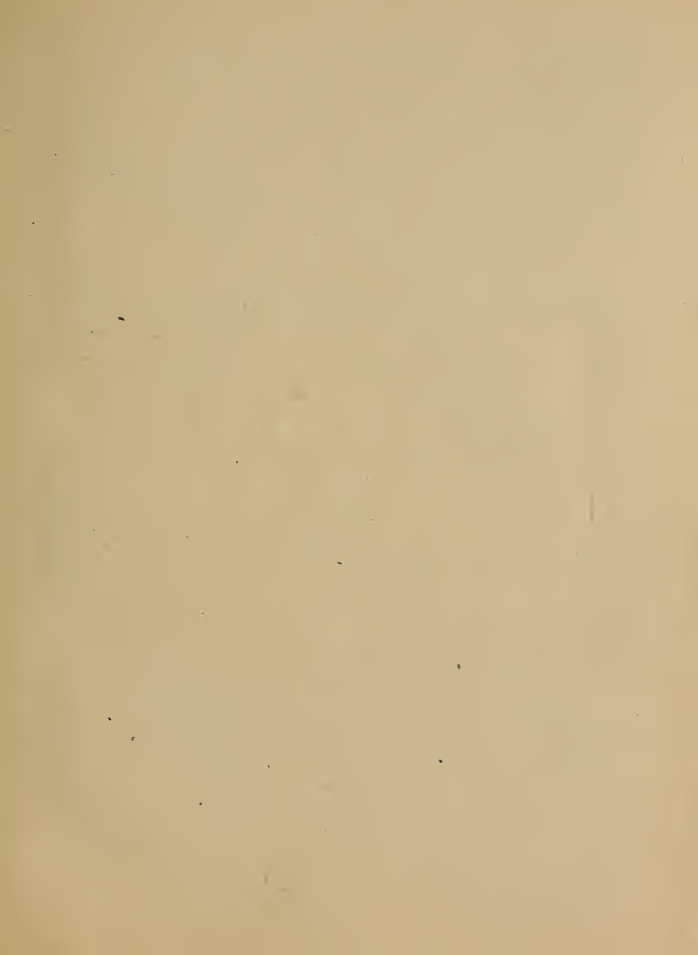
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# MASQUE OF CULTURE

BY  
ANNIE ELIOT

*Second Edition*



52697-2

HARTFORD, CONN.

Press of The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company

1894

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BY  
ANNIE ELIOT TRUMBULL

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TO

**The Saturday Morning Club**

OF HARTFORD

## PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CONFUCIUS,	.	.	A Chinese philosopher.
SOCRATES,	.	.	A Greek philosopher.
MINERVA,	.	.	A Goddess.
ZENOBIA,	.	.	A Palmyran Queen.
HYPATIA,	.	.	An Athenian Lady.
CASSANDRA,	.	.	A Trojan Prophetess.
LADY JANE GREY,	.	.	An English Peeress.
PORTIA,	.	.	A Venetian Belle.
MAXIMILIA R. STANTMORE,	A Defender of Woman.		
CHARLOTTE,	.	.	A Boston Light.
GERTRUDE,	.	.	A New York Success.
MESSENGER.			



*Prologue.*

NEAR OLYMPUS.

MINERVA,

SOCRATES,

CONFUCIUS.

*The Convention.*

BOSTON.

ZENOBIA,

PORTIA,

GERTRUDE,

HYPATIA,

CASSANDRA,

CONFUCIUS,

LADY JANE GREY,

CHARLOTTE,

SOCRATES,

MAXIMILIA R. STANTMORE,

MESSENGER.

*Epilogue.*

NEAR OLYMPUS.

MINERVA,

SOCRATES,

CONFUCIUS.



## PROLOGUE.

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(*Confucius and Socrates discovered seated in an arbor. Confucius calm and attentive. Socrates, abstracted. A silence which is broken by*)

CONFUCIUS (R.) (*with solemnity*). If one waiteth, let him have Patience, for things may happen.

SOCRATES (L.) (*starting from his abstraction*). Hum ! There is Truth in that. There is Truth in many things that lie within a Man's consciousness and his experience. Nevertheless a woman ought to be on time.

CON. A Woman hath many pursuits that are not evident to Observation. Many times she forgetteth them all and is late.

SOC. (*sadly*). Xantippe was always on time. I might almost say she was generally a *leetle* ahead of it.

CON. A wise woman summoneth Men to Council that she may take her Own Way without Reflection.

SOC. Have you ever met this — this lady ?

CON. I have never gazed upon her in life, but I have seen her photograph at a shop among other celebrities.

SOC. I have only seen her images myself. I hope (*wearily*)—I hope she is different from Xantippe—in manner.

*A Masque of Culture.*

CON. A Tongue is like to the Electric Current. It is easier to turn it on than to stop it afterwards.

SOC. (*sententiously*). Truth is the product of no one civilization. It has found its way into Asia. (*The sound of a gun is heard without.*) Hist! What is that! I think she has come.

CON. Gunpowder hath a great Sound, but a Gate openeth also Inwards.

SOC. It is she.

(*Enter Minerva C. She carries a rifle and a spear.*)

MINERVA. Good morning, gentlemen. (*They bow.*) Sorry to keep you waiting—but the train from Olympus was delayed at the drawbridge. (*She puts her rifle down in the corner, but retains the spear, with which she poses.*) Not loaded, gentlemen, I assure you. I always fire it off before I go into company. I keep the spear for show, but I carry the other for use.

(*Confucius offers her a chair. Socrates gazes at her abstractedly. She seats herself C.*)

MIN. (*easily*). Though this is the first time we have met, introductions are unnecessary. Let us proceed immediately to business.

SOC. Truth lieth not in multiplicity of affairs, but in the inner soul of a man.

CON. A Busy Bee is a thing that is to look upon and respect, but not to grasp unadvisedly.

MIN. (*somewhat perplexed*). Oh! Yes. Yes, as you say, gentlemen. (*A pause. Minerva looks at them a little apprehensively, but Confucius remains calm and*

*Socrates abstracted.*) I have asked you (*pauses*)—I have asked you to be present on this occasion on account of information received of the present state of female learning and development upon the earth.

Soc. Do you mean things are worse than they were in our—in my time?

MIN. I mean that there seems to have been great progress in this direction. That the learning and power which in earlier periods—such as ours—not that we belong precisely to the same period, you know. I think I have a little the advantage in the matter of age—eh, Socrates?

CON. (*politely*). You don't in the least look it.

MIN. (*gratified*). I'm afraid you are a dreadful flatterer! (*sits.*) But I believe I am rather well preserved, and I may as well say here and now that de Staël cream is most useful in removing sunburn, tan, and freckles. I freckle a good deal, being obliged to wear a helmet without any brim, as you perceive. Sometimes I think I *will* have a brim, no matter now it looks! Let me see, where was I?

Soc. We none of us can state precisely where we were, before the dawn of intelligence, but you were there—somewhere.

MIN. (*rising*). I don't know whether or not you mean to be rude, Socrates, but I advise you to be careful! (*She raises her spear.*)

Soc. (*hastily*). I was brought up to respect you, madam, I assure you.

CON. Though Sense be like a Needle among Dried Grass, let us not desist from searching after it.

MIN. So I say. I will go on. I find that Woman has assumed strange, new responsibilities, and made unaccustomed claims. That she hesitates not to raise her voice in public, and even to make her way into the sacred temples of learning. That she takes it upon herself to make decisions concerning things of public moment. There be strange talk of polls and stage plays, dress reform, the rostrum and the higher education. They speak no longer of the cradle and the distaff.

SOC. (*thoughtfully*). I have always thought they were capable of holding their own. Xantippe was, and didn't half try, either.

CON. Learning is a Trumpet that many blow and that giveth forth Divers Sounds.

MIN. Naturally I am quite interested in this work because I have always advocated the equality of the sexes; but it *has* made father mad. Now there is going to be a Parliament of Women next week. Of course it will be held in Boston. There are to be delegates from several countries and several centuries, and they will discuss the Progress of Woman.

SOC. Man findeth Truth when he goeth about with his own soul. Woman looketh for it in much confusion and findeth it not.

CON. A Woman and a Snail abide in their own Homes. Albeit there be some that must be moving, though they bear their Homes with them.

MIN. Yes *indeed*. Well, I must know just what has

been done and just what the convention proposes to do. I don't think a person, in my position ought to permit herself to get behind. I haven't time to go myself, and then, to speak frankly, going down to the earth isn't what it used to be. You see, they ask an awful lot of questions now when anybody goes down from Olympus, and it isn't always convenient to answer them. They want to know how you came and how long you are going to stay, and what you'll do when you go back, and oh! all sorts of things they didn't use to want to know. Pluto heard one of them say there was no such place as Hades! and he's been making the whole place over this summer, too. And a Chicago girl said to father that she wasn't afraid of old Cosmic Dust! Oh, it isn't what it used to be at all! It used to be enough for people to know we were there, no matter how we looked, but it isn't now — the world isn't half so respectful. So I thought I wouldn't go myself, but you two gentlemen have always been very much respected, and in looking about, you seemed to me the very best reporters to send. People know who you are, and all.

Soc. Is there a man that is known? Is there a soul that has communicated its essence? Is there a reputation that is a noumenon and not a mere phenomenon?

MIN. (*alarmed*). Bless me! I hadn't thought of that!

CON. What is said is but little, though often it seemeth to be much. A Rabbit is the friend of Man, yet he roameth in a Burrow.

MIN. (*quite depressed*). Well, of course, if you don't either of you like the idea—

*A Masque of Culture.*

Soc. The Idea! The idea is not a matter that is for liking, nor yet for repulsion. It is inherent, positive, and not tangible. (*He goes off into reverie.*)

CON. A man that hath an Idea hath erected unto himself a monument of Alabaster.

MIN. (*more depressed*). Oh, well, if you gentlemen have any better suggestion to make! There's Mercury, of course, he's always ready for errands, but I think it takes somebody who isn't so light-headed. Why, positively, Mercury would rather *make up* information than not tell a good story! Besides, he is open to the objection I've stated, and—well, *can* you think of anything that has to do with the subject?—not just general conversation, you know.

Soc. Did you want us to form a school among these ignorant women, to instruct—

MIN. (*hastily*). Oh no, don't do that. They don't like instruction! The convention will represent all shades of female opinion and culture—

CON. Opinion is rarely Culture, and Culture seeketh not to hide herself in Opinion. A Basket is large but it is sometimes overturned.

MIN. Yes, yes, to be sure.—There will be women, as I say, from every land and every century. The only standard adopted is that of intellect. I had a complimentary ticket, of course, but it is not transferable; still, I will give you a note, and I am sure they will admit you and treat you with respect as representatives of Culture. I can depend upon you for an unprejudiced account—which I might not get from women. I want you just to go and *listen*.



Soc. (*rising*). Listen! And to women! Has Truth taken unto herself the wings of thought and flown away from earth—that one should listen, then, to a woman? (*Minerva lifts her spear.*)

Con. (*hastening to placate Minerva*). If a bell be of Silver nevertheless its tongue giveth forth Sound. And we say it is no Small Thing.

Soc. (*perceiving his error*). (*Sits*). To be sure, I used to listen to Xantippe. (*aside*) But then somebody *had* to. (*eagerly*) Shall we not be expected to address the meeting?

Min. Why yes,—that is, of course, if you get the chance.

Con. Where there be Little to be said, and many to say it, there is little of the Silence that befitteth Wisdom.

Soc. (*hesitatingly*). I'd go in a minute, but I *don't* care about facing a parcel of women.

Min. Well, you'll have Confucius with you—if he'll go; you will, won't you, Confucius?

Con. A Man shall not shrink from a Task. A Button that is gone is worse than the Sewing of it on.

Soc. (*rises, convinced*). Well, then we'll go. Truth may be found in the desert places of the female intellect.

Min. Socrates!

Soc. Where it hath been planted by the hand of the goddess Minerva.

Min. (*mollified*). I'm real glad you'll go, both of you. And you'd better each take a grip, because you may have to stay over night. And be sure and tell me everything they say, and everything they have on. I can't stay any

longer now, I'm due in Chicago—I'm very popular just now in Chicago—but I'll send you passes, and will meet you here on your return. Much obliged to you for coming this morning. Gentlemen—farewell.

(*Exit Minerva C.*) (*Socrates paces up and down thoughtfully.*)

Soc. Mehercule! She hath given us the task of a grown man and not of a puling babe—to report the words of the mouths of women—you couldn't have reported Xantippe in short hand,—and to describe the color and the hang of divers cestuses and tunics! Were it not better to stay at home and evolve the knowledge that lies within our own souls?

CON. There are Things that are without the consciousness of a Man. These are but to be learned in the Turmoil of Existence. A Fan that is but a painted paper thing hath on it Images that are beyond the cognizance of a Philosopher.

Soc. Thou speakest well. We will go.

(*Re-enter Minerva C.*)

MIN. I forgot to say one thing. You know we spoke of the probability of your being called upon for a few remarks. Now if you are—you just try and say something—well, something *relevant*—something that refers to the subject. Of course you both of you speak beautifully, and it is a pleasure to hear you, I'm sure, but I think at a time like that you'd better just try to make sense—not wisdom, you know, but *sense*. I just thought I'd mention it. No offense, I hope. (*Turns to the door.*) (*Curtain.*)

## THE CONVENTION.

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*(A hall with slightly raised platform R. and chairs filled by the delegates L. The Boston delegation, headed by Charlotte, wear blue glasses. The New York delegation, headed by Gertrude, are in evening dress. There are several followers of Maximilia R. Stantmore in masculine vests and divided skirts. Maximilia stands on the platform a little at one side, the chair being unoccupied. Scattered about, so as to form an effective tableau are Zenobia, Hypatia, Cassandra, Lady Jane Grey, and Portia.*

*The curtain rises to the sound of confused, unintelligible and unintermittent talking. Maximilia is vainly endeavoring to make herself heard. A female telegraph messenger is standing at her side having just delivered a note.)*

MAXIMILIA. (R. C.) Women! Women! This matter must be decided. Women! *(They do not heed her. At last she steps to the bell which is on the desk and rings it violently. There is a pause.)* Fellow women! This note has just been brought to me. It is addressed to the convention at large. I have read it and it demands an immediate reply — before the meeting is called to order.

PORTIA. (*R.*) We can't answer it as a body, before the meeting has been called to order. See Book 4, Section C.

MAX. I am glad to tell the lady from Venice, Century unknown, that I am quite well acquainted with parliamentary usage, but this calls for decisive, if not official, action, and it must be settled by personal opinion, as we have not yet appointed a presiding officer.

GERTRUDE (*R.C.*) (*impatently*). Well, well, tell us what it is!

MAX. It is a note from Minerva—for whom we all have a great respect. (*She pauses and looks at her audience. Murmurs of Oh yes, certainly. Of course. Estimable goddess. Quite a superior sort of person.*)

MAX. I consider her one of the leaders of her day.

CHARLOTTE. (*L.*) But not really progressive—not as we understand Progress.

LADY JANE GREY. (*L.*) Perhaps we owe a certain amount of respect to the Past.

GERT. (*superciliously*). What a funny idea!

MAX. She writes to urge, that, as she cannot attend, we admit two of her friends to the convention.—Let them attend the opening and remain as long as they choose. It is rather unusual—

GERT. Are they men?

MAX. (*referring to the note*). Yes.

GERT. Then I say let them in.

HYPATIA. (*R.*) They might pick up something that would be of use to them. Perhaps we ought to let them in.

CHAR. Can't you find out who they are?

MAX. Yes, I know. They are Socrates and Confucius.

CHAR. (*with some pleasure*). Confucius! Why, I'd really quite like to meet him.

GERT. Don't recall the name, but dare say I've met him somewhere. Does he ever go to Tuxedo or —

CASSANDRA (*wildly, rushing C.*). Do not admit them! Keep them without the sacred precincts! The shades of my ancestors warn me! They bring torches of disaster! Socrates is a Greek! Away with him! (*The whole convention, in different tones of scorn*), O pshaw!

CASS. (*depressed*). I knew you'd say that.

HYPATIA. This really hardly seems to be the place for men.

MAX. (*seriously*). It may be that it is not. But is there — in the wide domain of action, is there really *any* place for Man? Is he not always a Parasite?

HYPATIA (*thoughtfully*). True.

CHAR. I suppose they might as well be here as anywhere.

ALL. Oh yes, yes, I suppose so.

MAX. Then I take it upon myself to say, admit them! (*To messenger.*) Go and tell these gentlemen that we shall be glad to see them, and that the convention opens immediately. (*Exit messenger, C.*) (*hurriedly.*) Now who will welcome them when they come? They will expect some sort of recognition for they are really very nice people.

LADY J. G. Why, you, I should think.

THE OTHERS. Why, yes. Why not? Of course.

MAX. (*coming down from the platform, C.*). O, no, I

couldn't. I have my position to think of, you know. It wouldn't do for me to welcome *men* to — oh, to anything! What would my constituents say? (*Goes R.*)

PORTIA. Well, then, *you*, Zenobia. You are by way of doing that sort of thing, you know.

ZEN. (*L. C.*) Oh, well, I'm quite willing. As Longinus used to say, it's all in the day's work.

PORTIA (*to Max*). Zenobia is just the sort of woman that appears well on a committee.

(*Enter Confucius and Socrates L. Max. falls back R. Zen. goes forward to meet them.*)

ZEN. (*C.*) (*graciously*). Mr. Socrates, I believe — Mr. Confucius.

(*An occasional whisper among the delegates, but no loud talking.*)

We are all glad to see you here. Our convention has not yet been called to order, but seats will be provided for you upon the platform. I hope you bring good news from Minerva.

CON. A Bringer of News findeth himself at the Gate of the city, and the Hearer saith "It is naught."

SOC. Look not for Truth in that which goeth from lip to lip; rather in the silence of a lover of the gods.

ZEN. (*after a pause*). O, yes. Certainly, (*another pause*). I am Zenobia — of Palmyra.

CON. (*politely*). That which saith "Behold I am air" and is not — it is a Palm Leaf Fan. (*Zen. bows and smiles.*)

ZEN. (*aside to Max.*) He is certainly most civil, but I

don't quite catch his idea. (*Bows and smiles again. Confucius bows. Socrates looks somewhat bored. The pause threatens to become awkward.*)

ZEN. (*with sudden inspiration.*) Won't you go in the other room and have a cup of tea?— Oh, dear, there isn't any— (*pauses, and looks desperately around.*)

CHAR. (*coming C.*) I would like to meet the gentlemen.

ZEN. Oh, certainly. (*To Socrates.*) Miss Charlotte— of Boston.

CHAR. I would like to have a few moments' conversation with you. It occurs to me that Plato may not have done you entire justice. Naturally I have always understood you to be a Unitarian. (*They converse apart at the front, L.*)

ZEN. (*to Confucius; she has brought up Lady J. G.*). Here is Lady Jane Grey. (*Aside*) Belongs to one of our best families. (*Aloud*) And Miss Maximilia Stantmore— the philosopher Confucius.

CON. (*gazing at Max.*). A Woman clothed after the similitude of a Man hath been known to be a Goddess. (*Goes R.*)

MAX (*much pleased*). Well, I'm sure! (*They converse apart, front, R. Gertrude comes forward to Zen. C.*)

GERT. You always *do* say just the right thing.

ZEN. (*smiling*). Well, I try to.

GERT. But I can't tell whether that Confucius does or not— he makes me sort of nervous.

PORTIA (*R.*). I say that it is time some one took the Chair and called the convention to order.

*The Masque of Culture.*

CASS. (*rushing C., wildly*). Call it not order! Call it disorder! It will be not convention but contention! I see before me loom the dangers of misrule. Beware! Beware! Oh most unhappy me!

ALL. O, pshaw!

CASS. (*depressed*). I knew you'd say that.

MAX. I nominate Hypatia for the chair.

SEVERAL VOICES. Yes, Hypatia. Hypatia!

HYPATIA. I really must decline. I'd rather stay in the background. I was obliged to be rather conspicuous at one time and I found it unpleasant. Since then my preference has been for a retired life.

MAX. Then, Lady Jane Grey—you.

LADY J. G. (*hurriedly*). Oh, no, I couldn't, really! I've never cared to take very prominent seats since—since, well—since—

HYP. and ZEN. (*sympathetically*). O yes, we know.

GERT. (*aside to Max.*). Never heard of her before. Probably she doesn't really belong to the four hundred.

ZEN. (*to Max.*) Miss Stantmore, you must take it yourself.

SEVERAL VOICES. Yes, Stantmore, Stantmore!

MAX. Oh, no—you!

SOC. Are there not chairs enough that each may have one? Or is not the standing good?

CON. Why should women dispute of a Chair? Have not the wise been found upon a Three-Legged Stool? (*All look at Soc. and Con. in surprise.*)

GERT. (*aside*). I have *no* use for Confucius.

CHAR. (*to Max.*) You'd better take it—you will keep



good order. (*Aside*) And it will keep it away from Portia. If she gets it she'll talk all night!

MAX. Well, if it is the wish of the Assembly of course—

ALL. It is! It is!

MAX. I will accept the honor. (*She goes R. to the platform and arranges seats for the guests at the side towards front. The others seat themselves L. Con. and Soc. come C. during the delay.*)

SOC. (*troubled*). Truly we see strange things. Things unspoken of by the Egyptians, nor yet the Phoenicians. And it is not for me to remember the color of their peplums.

CON. There be in manly Attire, and they are not Men; and there be that use Words and know not their Meaning; and there be none that keep Silence. (*Conversation breaks out.*)

MAX. The Convention is called to order. (*Attentive silence.*) Before we proceed to the business of the hour, I wish to say that it has seemed best to those having the arrangements for this meeting in hand, to appoint a committee to collect information concerning anything of special interest to us in our public capacity that has transpired within a comparatively recent period, and to report to us by district messenger. It is empowered to exercise a wide choice, and many of the facts will perhaps not be news to us of the 19th Century, but there are others whose interest dates from—well, from an earlier date—and the committee is making an effort to glean information of interest to them. Its messengers have permission to interrupt our deliberations.

*A Masque of Culture.*

Fellow-women, we have come together, as you all know, to learn of the Advance of Woman, her Advance in all branches of the Tree of Knowledge that lie within her hands. The March of Progress is in her ears. The Trumpet of Fame is at her lips. The Thread of Fate has become her football. Of this we would learn to-day. Of the past darkness when Woman was considered a Domestic Animal, of the faint glimmering when she was held an Ornament, of the dawn when she was judged a Power, of the broad Sunlight of to-day when she is acknowledged a Lawgiver. (*Applause.*) To-day Woman is preëminent, to-day the foot that rocks the world has fortunately time to rock the cradle — but let us not forget those beacon lights of gloomier times, whose rays were all that saved the world from destruction. Let me, in this connection, call upon Zenobia of Palmyra, third century. (*Applause.*)

ZEN. (*L. front*). I really don't know that I have very much to say that you would care to hear.

SOC. Truth is now and then found in the mouth of a woman, though it be not in her heart.

MAX. You will be given an opportunity to speak later, Socrates. Zenobia now has the floor.

SOC. Truth needs not the floor of a house for her tread. She is found in the streets and in gardens.

CON. A wooden Drum resoundeth in a Measure ; but when we hear a shriek in the night, we say " It is an Owl."

MAX. (*firmly*). Zenobia has the —

PORTIA. Miss Chairman, let me ask the gentlemen a

few questions. (*Aside.*) I knew they'd make trouble. (*Aloud.*) If Truth be in the streets and gardens, she is in two places at once. Nothing can be in two places at once. Therefore Truth is nothing. (*Soc. is amazed. She turns to Con.*) A wooden drum won't go in a measure because we don't have measures for more than a few pecks. After that they become baskets and barrels. Therefore a wooden drum does not resound in a measure. Secondly, it hasn't anything to do with an owl anyhow. Section 5, Book J. (*She reseats herself. Con. and Soc. open their mouths to reply, but think better of it.*)

MAX. Zenobia of Palmyra!

ZEN. (*C.*) I was only going to say that I had to study a good deal with Longinus. I *never* liked Arithmetic.

CHAR. (*aside.*) (*L.*) Fancy studying Arithmetic! What a waste of time!

ZEN. But I did like French — though I only read, don't speak it at all. After all, I cared for athletics more than anything else.

CHAR. Delsarte system?

ZEN. What did you say?

CHAR. Delsarte system. Exercises every muscle of the body, you know. Teaches grace and ease —

GERT. (*with intention.*) Do they have it in Boston?

MAX. Order! Order! Zenobia has the floor.

ZEN. I will read you a letter written at that time which will give you a better idea than anything else how we spent our time. (*Takes up book, "Letters from Palmyra."*) They were printed afterwards.

CASS. (*wildly*). Don't let her read it ! It will be long ! Ye will all want to read letters !— Or recite something ! Ye will all have reminiscences and talk about the Fair ! (*All make as if to speak.*) The sacred fire burns low in the vessel and still ye talk !

ALL. O pshaw !

CASS. (*depressed*). I knew you'd say that.

ZEN. (*reads*). "The following day was appointed for the chase, and early in the morning I was waked by the braying of trumpets and the baying of dogs. I found the queen already mounted, and equipped for the sport"—

GERT. Oh, of course. Just a hunt. We have them at Newport. Did you have a real fox or only—

MAX. Zenobia of Palmyra !

ZEN. (*reads*). "Surrounded by Zabdas, Longinus, and a few of the nobles of Palmyra. We were soon joined by Julia and Fausta."

GERT. Julia who ?

ZEN. (*reads*). "In order to insure our sport, a tiger, made fierce by being for some days deprived of food, had the preceding evening been let loose from the royal collection into the neighboring forests"—

LADY J. G. Dear me, wasn't that awful ? Weren't you scared ? At 'ome they used to 'unt the boar, but—

GERT. Once when we were at the Madison Square Garden—

MAX. (*wearily*). Zenobia of Palmyra.

ZEN. (*reads*). "These forests, abounding in game, commence immediately, as it were, in the rear of the palace. They present a boundless continuity of crag,

mountain, and wooded plain (*the Assembly begins to be a little bored*), offering every variety of ground to those who seek the pleasures of the chase." (*Zen. hears them sigh and says apprehensively*) I will pass on. (*Reads.*) "It was a moment of inexpressible horror. At the same instant our eyes caught the form of the famished tiger, just in the act to spring from the crag upon the unconscious queen —"

SOC. (*interested*). Why now you're shouting!

CON. It is not Meet that men feed tigers, but —

CHAR. (*disgusted*). This isn't a time for poor jokes.

CON. (*perplexed, but concludes*)—but it is a wise Candle that bloweth out Another.

MAX. I really must ask you not to interrupt, gentlemen; it is very confusing.

CASS. (*spitefully*). I told you so, anyhow!

ZEN. (*reads*). "But before we had time to alarm Zenobia — which would indeed have been useless — a shaft from an unerring arm arrested the monster in mid-air, whose body then tumbled heavily at the feet of Zenobia's Arab. The horse, rearing with affright, had nearly dashed the queen against the opposite rocks, but keeping her seat, she soon, by her powerful arm"—(*smiling, with a little embarrassment*) I just put this in, ladies, because it happens to be here, you know —

ALL. Yes, yes, yes.

ZEN. "And complete horsemanship, reduced him to his obedience. A thrust from my hunting spear quickly dispatched the dying beast." That is the way we women amused ourselves in my day. (*Applause.*)

CHAR. (*aside to Lady J. G.*) She has been reading Mr. Isaacs. (*Enter Messenger.*)

MAX. Messenger.

MESS. Stanley has discovered the sources of the Nile.

GERT. Well, I guess that news came by way of Philadelphia!

HYP. The sources of the Nile! How interesting!

SOC. Of a truth the Egyptians knew it not in my day!

MAX. (*to Mess. severely*). Let me see your ticket!  
(*Takes it.*)

LADY J. G. (*to Gert.*). We had discoverers in England, too. Where are they?

GERT. Where are what?

LADY J. G. The sources of the Nile?

GERT. (*vaguely*). Oh they are — well — why just where they always were, I suppose. To tell you the truth, Stanley told us so long ago that I have about forgotten. And then he has married an English girl since, and that is so much more important. We don't have to remember things in New York, you know — they're all there — on the surface.

MESS. And he has witnessed unheard-of atrocities in Africa — the worst of them within his own troop.

ZEN. (*indifferently*). The fortunes of war, I suppose. Tortures, and so on.

MAX. (*severely to Mess.*). What time did you start from the office?

MESS. (*guiltily*). Only a little while ago. Its on that (*points to ticket*). At eight o'clock P. M. The twenty-first.

MAX. Yes, but I see you've changed the date to one month later. You've waited for the twenty-first, 8 P. M., to come around again. Don't do that. We want the news more promptly. You can go. (*Exit Mess.*)

PORTIA (*thoughtfully*). He said in Africa. That's where the Anthropophagi do grow with heads beneath their shoulders. I used to hear Desdemona — (*springing up*) — Miss Chairman!

MAX. (*reprovingly*). Portia of Venice, century unknown.

POR. (*comes C.*). I did rather a clever thing once myself. You see there was a Jew — it was an iniquitous proceeding — and there was a great deal of hard feeling and I — wait a minute — I think I have the notes of my speech in my pocket. It was very well reported. (*Searches for her pocket*).

CHAR. (*resignedly, aside to Lady J. G.*). Now I suppose we'll have to have the whole thing — "The quality of mercy," you know.

LADY J. G. (*sadly*). No, I don't know. They didn't have any where I was.

CHAR. Oh, no, poor thing — no wonder you feel so. But I meant Shakespeare, you know.

LADY J. G. Shakespeare?

CHAR. (*amazed*). Do you mean to say Roger Ascham didn't teach you Shakespeare!

(*Lady Jane G. shakes her head. Portia still looks for her pocket.*)

CON. When that which was not is lost, a Woman saith, It is a Pocket.

MAX. (*who has been growing restless*). It seems to me that we are not advancing very fast, but are rather going backwards. While Portia of Venice, century unknown, is looking for her notes, I will ask Charlotte of Boston, 19th century, to state what, in her opinion, occupies woman most, to-day.

CHAR. (*settling her glasses firmly on her nose*). I have no doubt that it is Esoteric Buddhism. (*Comes C.*)

CON. (*with mild excitement*). What!

CHAR. (*calmly*). Oh, yes. Manifestations have been such as to lead me to think that Theosophy is in the ascendant. The astral body —

CON. (*astonished*). Hath a Woman named the Mysteries? Doth she speak of the Permeating Forces? Shall the parrot say, Behold, I am a Pundit?

CHAR. (*patronizingly*). I suppose we have gone a good deal farther than they did in your day. I've had pretty good luck with manifestations myself. Only the other day a kitten —

Soc. Said the Egyptians: Truth is not far from a Cat. The ignorant sometimes set foot upon the rock of Learning.

CASS. (*C., wildly*). Talk not of cats! The Manes of my ancestors wave their hands at me from Acheron! Beware! For mice have had wings, and fur may yet fly.

ALL. Oh, pshaw!

CASS. (*depressed*). I knew you'd say that.

MAX. (*despairingly*). If any of you can say anything to which all the rest of you will listen, I wish she would!



POR. (*coming C., her notes in her hand*). I can give you my little speech now, if you like. You see, it was just as Shylock thought he was going to have it all his own way. Antonio — Antonio was a nice man, very kind and obliging —

MAX. I think the ladies know the circumstances.

HYP. (*gently*). I don't think I do.

CHAR. (*aside*). Oh, Hypatia is so good-natured!

POR. And he really was unfortunate — everything went wrong. In short, I pulled him out of quite a hole with my little speech. It begins, "The quality of mercy is not strained —" Perhaps some of you have heard it.

SEVERAL VOICES. We have! We have!

CASS. (*spitefully*). I told you so!

POR. (*undisturbed, with elocutionary expression*).

"The quality of mercy is not strained ;  
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,  
Upon the place beneath ; it is twice bless'd ;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes ;  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown ;  
His sceptre shows —"

GERT. (*excitedly, comes C.*). Why, Ellen Terry says that! I don't think you ought to have taken the words out of anybody else's mouth. It isn't yours at all.

SOC. (*with an air of reproof*). Know thyself! For a woman as for a man is the adage. Know thyself.

POR. (*injured, goes L.*). Well, I'm sure! (*Conversation breaks out.*)

MAX. (*rapping*). Order! Order! Portia knows her

lines very well indeed. And I'm very glad that she had the presence of mind to say them in court. It speaks well for Woman at that time that she should have found such a representative. It is not necessary to say that she won her cause, for it is always the right one! (*Applause.*)

GERT. She had to make them think she was a man in order to do it, though.

VOICES. 'Sh — 'sh.

MAX. That was only because judges and juries at that time were unlike those of to-day.

GERT. Oh, to be sure.

MAX. It seems to me that it might be well to divide the subject of Progress. There seems to be some little confusion — perhaps it is too large a subject to handle all at once. Instead of relating individual experiences, let us dwell upon the different vocations in which Woman appears. In this connection I will ask Portia to speak upon the Drama.

CHAR. (*rising*). I had a good deal to say upon the Drama myself —

GERT. The last time it was kittens!

CHAR. (*unheeding*) — after I had finished with Esoteric Buddhism.

MAX. Hypatia, will you take Theology?

HYP. (*hastily*). No, I thank you. I don't like to say anything about Theology.

MAX. Well, who will take Theology?

CHAR. (*rising promptly*). I will. At Andover —

MAX. You have Buddhism already. That ought to be enough.

CHAR. (*L. C., proudly*). It isn't enough for a Boston mind. No one thing is.

SOC. Let men study their own minds though they be choked with accumulations of ignorance. It may be they may yet find a grain of knowledge.

CON. When a thing steameth and shineth and maketh a Humming Noise, it is most usually a Teakettle.

MAX. Lady Jane Grey; suppose you —

LADY J. G. Oh, no, please! I'd rather not have theology. They used to have trials of heresy in *my* day.

CASS. (*wildly, C.*). They will have them now! Speak not of theology! Speak not of Hades and Styx! The sacred tripod has revealed the oracle! Speak not of theology or of Pluto! They will bring contentions. Opinion is dangerous! Men shall be tried for heresy to-day.

ALL. Oh, pshaw!

CASS. (*depressed*). I knew you'd say that.

MAX. Well, how about music? Who will take music?

CHAR. (*promptly, rising*). I will. Our symphony concerts —

MAX. Gertrude of New York. I will ask you to speak of Music. There remains Literature—I myself will speak of Politics. As for Literature —

CHAR. (*promptly, rising*). I will take Literature, of course. (*Looking calmly about.*) We discovered Literature—in Boston.

HYP. Oh, dear!

LADY J. G. Fancy! Why, Mr. Ascham used to say —

ZEN. You draw a long bow!

SOC. A man, being struck, seeth stars. Whereafter,

being questioned, he saith : Truly there be stars! for he hath seen them.

CON. A Riddle goeth about, and, when it hath found its own Answer, it saith : The Oak is a little Thing.

(*Enter Messenger.*)

MAX. Well.

MESS. They have been having some gentlemen up for heresy, and have condemned them.

LADY J. G. (*alarmed*). Oh, not to the flames, poor creatures!

MESS. N-no. I guess not. Not here, anyhow.

MAX. No, we don't burn now-a-days. We have progressed. Go on.

MESS. They maintained that they did not believe Joseph's coat had in it all the colors known at the present day.

MAX. Why not?

MESS. Because the ancients didn't know of them all—crushed strawberry for one.

PORTIA. That sounds reasonable.

LADY J. G. (*firmly*). But we must not talk about things being *reasonable* in point of doctrine. (*Half aside.*) Else were perhaps our sainted Henry of England of blessed memory not the very apostolic Head of the Church.

MAX. So they condemned them?

MESS. Yes; the judge decided that such opinions were subversive of truth.

HYP. This is the first thing that makes me feel really

at home. You see it was only fourteen hundred years ago *I* was condemned for *my* opinions.

CASS. (*spitefully*). I told you so, anyhow.

MESS. They have forbidden them to teach, saying that they were corruptors of youth.

SOC. Corruptors of youth! It is the thing that they said of me more than two thousand years ago. I had doubted that it were the same world, but of a truth it is. (*To Mess.*). Said they anything about hemlock?

MESS. Mercy on us! No!

MAX. Oh, no—nothing about hemlock, I am sure. You forget how we have progressed. (*To Mess.*). You may go. (*Exit Mess.*). (*To Char.*). Take Literature, then, Miss Charlotte. I suppose there is nothing you do not know about it.

CHAR. Certainly not. Yet it is not so much that we Bostonians know so *much*—it would not be good taste, perhaps, to dwell upon that—but that other people know so little.

MAX. Portia of Venice—instead of going on with your private history, will you say a few words on the Drama?

PORTIA (*comes C.*). Certainly. In my day we were fond of masques and interludes and—

SOC. And could the voice of woman be heard in the amphitheatre? Did not the mask muffle her feeble accents?

PORTIA (*annoyed*). Of course, if you gentlemen are going to try and be funny all the time, there is no use talking!

SOC. (*with dignity*). It is not for him who has walked barefoot in the search for Truth to seek to bring laughter to the lips of a woman.

CON. The Balloon mounteth on the appointed day, being lighter than Air. But they that stand by say It is a Pun.

SOC. I ask yet a second time, even were it fitting that a woman be seen upon the proscenium, can the feebleness of her voice penetrate through the mask to the amphitheatre?

GERT. (*aside*). Oh, he's got the catcher all mixed up with the umpire!

CHAR. We did the Antigone in Boston, you know. (*To Socrates.*) It was probably put on better than you used to see it.

SOC. Hath the tragedy of the daughter of Œdipus become sport for maidens? Hath Sophocles written them a libretto? Even Aristophanes, if he did make fun of me, never thought of that!

GERT. (*aside*). Aris — what?

CHAR. There is no sport about it, I assure you. We don't do things that way in Boston. We believe in the serious Drama. (*Portia seats herself in despair.*)

SOC. And so on the great days of the Boston Empire you put before the people those of the divine afflatus — Eschylus and Euripides.

CHAR. Oh, no; they are rather gone by. We used to pay them more attention. But we have Ibsen now, you know. And Margaret Fleming.

SOC. Mehercule! (*He wraps his face in his mantle*

*after the manner of the Greek tragedy, and remains silent.)*

MAX. (*looking at Soc. considerately.*) There seems to be something a little unfortunate in our reference to the Drama. We will for the present pass on to something else. Gertrude of New York! Will you speak of what Woman is doing for the Music of the present?

CASS. (*wildly*) (*C.*) Don't let her talk about music! She will lose her head! We shall all lose our heads! The funeral pyre is lighted. There will be dragons and horses and trilogies!

ALL. Oh, pshaw!

CASS. I knew you'd say that.

GERT. (*glibly.*) (*Comes C.*) There is no music of the present. The Music of the Future is all that really exists you know.

CON. (*faintly.*) I used to sing and play a little myself when I was at home in Loo.

GERT. Oh, undoubtedly. People sing and play now. But that isn't Music. There is no *motif*. Who ever heard of a Confucius *motif*, for example?

CON. When the Large purposeth to come together with the Small, it is a Mouth organ and there is no Silence.

GERT. Women do a great deal for the Music of the Future! They always wear full dress, and there have been many nights when there were half a dozen diamond necklaces in one box. Wagner was a great man. He knew how to combine. Everything has its part, you know, and the orchestra and the singing and the talking all blend and produce harmony — each having its own *motif*.

CON. And is it the singers who talk, or the talkers who sing?

GERT. (*complacently*). Oh, no. *We* talk, you know, while *they* sing. Wagner was one of those all around geniuses, you know. He allows for *everything*.

CON. Alas! Is the day of Courtesy over, too? A Locust thinketh himself a silent Bird, but he saith aloud, "I listen." (*He relapses into extreme sadness.*)

GERT. (*impatiently*). Well, I don't know what you mean by a locust, but, of course, there is not any need of listening to Wagner's music. You hear it anyhow. In the future, it will be played upon the barrel organ about our streets, and then the millennium will have come. (*Many of the Assembly seem depressed.*) You see the Trilogy is—

CHAR. (*Comes C.*) We have hardly time for the Trilogy. It is better to have selections, as we have at the Symphony—

GERT. The Niebelungen Lied—

MAX. (*firmly*). We really cannot have the Niebelungen Lied now. You know we haven't had anything else for a long time.

CHAR. Besides, though the Niebelungen Lied is all very well, I prefer the Elder Edda.

LADY J. G. (*timidly*). Hasn't there been any literature since?

CHAR. None except literature of which those ancient sagas were the prototype. You see in the earlier ages—

GERT. (*exasperated*). Who is telling about the Niebelungen Lied, anyway! (*Conversation breaks out.*)



MAX. Order! Order!

CASS. (*snappishly*). I told you so!

SOC. (*from the folds of his mantle*). I am not feeling very well, Confucius, are you?

CON. (*his head in his hands*). When there is much Speech and Ignorance nameth names, the philosopher saith, "It is a Pain."

MAX. As we are dealing to-day with the Past and the Present, let us leave the Music of the Future and hear what Charlotte—of Boston—has to say of Literature. Perhaps (*kindly, to Charlotte*) you will say all you have to say now, and then you will not interrupt afterwards.

CHAR. (C.) It is difficult for a Bostonian to say all she has to say—she is at once too catholic and too cultured. Literature, in our sense of the word, the true Boston sense, begins with Browning. This phase may be said to end in Red Cotton Night Cap country.

GERT. (*sotto voce*). I could have told you it would, beforehand.

CHAR. There is little between the sagas we have just spoken of and Browning. It is the watchword of the truly cultured, that where he is most abstruse, there he is most beautiful. We leave his lighter work to those who care to understand what they read. We have higher motives in reading him; there is a loftier pleasure in his unpunctuated moods than in those that please the careless ear, as I could convince you by a few extracts—

GERT. Oh, I say!

CASS. (*wildly*). I told you so!

CHAR.—had I time. Then from Browning, who treats of the world as it should be, we come to Ibsen, who treats of the world as it is—through blue glasses. That is one reason we like him in Boston—he looks at life through blue glasses.

*(Enter Messenger.)*

MAX. We will suspend business for some minutes.  
*(To Mess.)* What is it?

MESSENGER *(presenting despatch.)* International news.

MAX. *(opening envelope—carelessly to Con.)* Confucius, please sign. *(Business of Con. and Mess. Con. looks at bit of paper respectfully and makes many bows. Mess. grows a little weary.)*

MAX. *(absent-mindedly, reading note.)* Oh, sign, and put the hour of delivery as you are accustomed to—backwards.

*(Further business, after which Mess. signs, herself.)*  
Yes, important news. Important to England, too.

LADY J. G. *(Comes C.) (with enthusiasm.)* Then it be great news! My country hath ever brave men and true, albeit tossed hither and thither by winds of doctrine. Hath there been fighting, and is the sovereign of England as ever in the van?

MAX. *(looking at her curiously.)* No, nothing of that sort; in fact, sovereigns are rarely there now-a-days—in the van—*(aside)* except William of Germany; he lives there. *(Aloud.)* England has suffered defeat.

LADY J. G. Defeat? Not upon English ground!

MAX. No, not on English ground.

LADY J. G. Upon the high seas?

MAX. Ye-es. That is — rather high seas. (*Aside to Gert.*) I don't know that it's quite civil to go on.

LADY J. G. You keep something from me! Can it be that the heir to the throne hath perished leading a forlorn hope?

GERT. (*flippantly*). Don't look so troubled, Lady Jane. Laying corner-stones and opening bazars isn't usually dangerous.

LADY J. G. I fear me my lord the duke hath had words with — with — is it the king? — or hath Mary — or is it Elizabeth? I am forgetting — but have they had words concerning the succession?

MAX. Well, there have been words about it. There are some that say there won't be any.

LADY J. G. (*horrified*). Any what?

MAX. Any succession.

LADY J. G. (*excitedly*). But there will be war! There will be flayings and burnings!

CHAR. (*L.*) Oh, no, there won't. They know better — that is, Wales does — Wales knows a good deal; we are more loyal to the Prince in Boston now than we were some years back.

MAX. But this news hasn't anything to do with the Prince at all. The Prince isn't in it.

GERT. (*impatiently*). Well, why don't you tell us what it is. Which of them has married an American girl now?

MAX. The Vigilant has defeated the Valkyrie.

GERT. (*with a glance at Charlotte*). Why, of course it would. It was built in New York.

CHAR. (*returning the glance*). But Boston set the fashion.

HYP. The names please me, though I know not altogether their significance — the Vigilant and the Valkyrie.

MAX. They are the names of yachts — boats.

CHAR. The Valkyrie is a Scandinavian —

LADY J. G. (*excitedly*). The names of boats. And England beaten! (*proudly*). There is a mistake. England never acknowledges defeat!

MAX. No. She doesn't acknowledge it this time. But she is beaten all the same. And she's been before. (*Exit Mess.*)

GERT. (*aside*). I'm so glad Lady Jane interrupted Charlotte when she began on the Scandinavian. We would have gone from the Valkyrie to the Vikings and on to the Vandals and the Visigoths — they all go together.

LADY J. G. (*sinking back in her chair*). It might have been worse. I feared a rebellion, a conspiracy, or that the Prince had been injured in a boar hunt.

MAX. Oh, no, nothing of the kind. Besides, the last time he was injured, it was not in a boar hunt.

LADY J. G. How then?

MAX. In a game of baccarat. They play baccarat now.

(*Lady J. G. buries her head in her hands.*)

GERT. And that's not very exciting from an American standpoint, anyway. Baccarat isn't in it with poker — only gambling is cheaper under a constitutional monarch than it is here — at least for the monarch.

LADY J. G. (*faintly*). What would Edward VI. say?

PORTIA (*rising quickly*). Before continuing the debate I would like to suggest that as, if I understand it aright, neither Browning nor Ibsen is a woman —

GERT. Neither is Kipling — you may as well put in Kipling — we all know she is coming to him next —

PORTIA. Nor Kipling — that Charlotte is wandering from the subject — Volume VII, Section 16,— which is, or ought to be, Woman in Literature.

CHAR. (*with dignity*). Boston women never wander from the subject. Whatever they are talking of immediately becomes *the* subject.

SOC. (*still muffled in his mantle*). That was just the way it was with Xantippe. I don't think I care about staying much longer, Confucius.

CHAR. But when you ask me what Woman has done for Literature, I answer — She has enshrined it! She has announced its sovereignty! She has proclaimed it King! She has organized Browning clubs and instituted an Ibsen cult! She has exploited Sophocles! She has burned incense and chanted praises! She has discovered; she has pointed out! In some cases she has even read!! Why should I say more?

ALL. Why, indeed?

CON. (*brightening up*). When a Skein is snarled, we are glad when one proclaimeth: "It is an End."

CHAR. (*somewhat disconcerted*). I had, however, thought of saying more —

MAX. It is nearly time for a recess already, and as I fear our guests may not be equal to staying through, I want myself to say a few words of Woman in Politics. I shall divide these few words as follows: Woman at the Ballot-box —

SOC. (*in muffled tones*). Mehercule!

MAX. Woman as a Wirepuller. Woman on the Rosstrum; Woman on the School Committee; Woman in the Presidential Chair; and finally, Woman in the Militia.

(*Soc. and Con. gradually raise their heads during this enumeration, and look at each other with a glance of mutual understanding.*)

SOC. (*solemnly*). Even Xantippe wasn't all those!

CON. When a Thing seemeth too large to swallow, beware, lest there be a Hook in it. Let us go.

GERT. (*aside, irreverently*). Confucius is all balled up!

SOC. (*to Max.*) If thou speakest Truth it is a sacrilege, and if thou speakest not Truth I will have none of it. (*To Con.*) Let us go.

CON. When one would not be present one sayeth aloud: It is a Headache. Let us go.

MAX. (*coldly*). Oh, go, by all means. I am not surprised that you find the 19th century spirit too strong for you.

(*Soc. and Con. rise and make preparations for departure.*)

CASS. (*C.*) (*wildly*). Oh, don't let them go! Bid them stay! When they go, will come hissing, destruction, and

confusion dire! Without them we be but women! The fire-brand of dissension will be flung in our midst! The sibylline books have said to me, "Don't let all the men go!"

ALL. Oh, pshaw!

CASS. I knew you'd say that.

*(During Cassandra's speech Con. and Soc. have been moving slowly and feebly towards the door leaning on one another. As they go, Zen. says, politely) —*

ZEN. Please give my regards to Minerva.

SOC. *(peevishly)*. I don't know what we shall give Minerva!

PORTIA *(who has evidently been thinking over Maximilia's speech.)* Speaking of Woman in Politics: it is all very well to have her all those other things, but I do not approve of Woman at the Ballot-Box. It seems to me —

ZEN. The Ballot-Box is all well enough, but what in the world would a woman do on a School Committee! Such indoor occupations —

CHAR. I thoroughly approve of Woman on the School Committee, but I do not think she belongs in the Militia — in spite of the Daughters of the Revolution. In Boston —

HYP. The militia really seems to me to *demand* the softening influence of woman. It is Woman as a Wire-puller to which I take exception. The brutal soldiery —

GERT. I think as a wire-puller she'd do very well, but in the Presidential chair she would be simply ridiculous. It isn't her *style*; it is —

LADY J. G. I don't see what she wants in Politics

anyway! It is most disastrous sometimes, and as for the rostrum, it sounds like —

*(At this point the tongues all break loose, and there is the same sound of strenuous, unheeded debate, to which the curtain rose. Everybody talks and nobody listens. Max. occasionally raps for order, and nobody comes to order.)*

*The curtain slowly descends, while Con. and Soc. pause at the door, gazing back into the confusion of the room, each of them a prey to gloom and despair. Just before the curtain reaches the floor, the voice of Cassandra rises above the tumult.)*

CASS. I TOLD YOU SO!

TABLEAU.

Soc.      Con.

(Platform.)

Max.

Cass.

(Chairs.)

Lady J.G.

Gert.

Hyp.

Portia.

Zen.

Char.



## EPILOGUE.

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*Scene. Same as Prologue.*

*(Minerva discovered seated just inside the arbor, leaning on her spear.)*

MIN. It seems as if they never would come. Men always do like to be just a little behindhand. They call it being just in time. Father acts the same way about the Olympian train. I'm there ten minutes ahead, and waiting, and all in a flutter for fear he'll be late, and then he gets to the platform and just *throws* his bag on. It's about the only thing that makes me nervous. I think it is better to be a little too early now and then. *(Rises and poses in the doorway.)* I wonder what sort of time they have had! I'm afraid they were a sort of drag on the meeting; the women may have been a little timid before them — being such distinguished men — and then coming as they did from me. *(Sits) (complacently.)* I fancy they haven't progressed much since — well — since me. I'd pass for having a good deal of executive ability in *any* generation, though, of course, things have changed a good deal, and if the opinion of a goddess is worth anything, and it seems to me it ought to be, though, as I said before, it isn't what it was once — not

always for the better. (*Rises again, and looks out of the door, shading her eyes with her hand—a pause.*) There they are now! But mercy on us, what makes them walk so slowly?—and they lean on each other so! I didn't know Socrates ever leaned on anybody, — or, for that matter, Confucius either. They must have had a tiresome journey up. (*Calls aloud.*) Well? Glad to get back? Is this hot enough for you? (*Waves her handkerchief.*) They don't respond very enthusiastically, I must say. They act the way Paris did when I spoke to him beforehand about that apple—a little stand-offish. (*Enter Soc. and Con. leaning on one another and looking abject and weary.*) Well, what sort of time did you have? (*They look at her and shake their heads sadly.*) What have you been doing, anyway?

Soc. (*tottering to a chair R.*). Hearing women talk.

CON. (*tottering to a chair L.*). When a Thing acheth and cryeth for rest, it is an Ear Drum. (*They seat themselves, slowly.*)

MIN. (*stands C., looking from one to another*). Well, I must say! I should not think *you* would be alarmed by the tongues of women, Socrates.

Soc. Xantippe didn't have but one. (*A pause.*)

MIN. (*impatently*). When do you think you'll feel well enough to give me your report? I'm not accustomed to be kept waiting. (*Changes her shield and spear from one hand to the other, so that they make a threatening clatter.*)

Soc. (*unmoved*). Nothing that you can do will scare us now.

(*Min. stands aghast, too amazed to be angry.*)

CON. (*reviving into some shadow of his former ceremonious courtesy.*) When one hath listened to the Buzzing of many Bees, even the Queen Bee seemeth a small Thing.

SOC. (*to Con.*). What's the use of talking like that! She'll have to know sometime.

MIN. (*alarmed*). What will I have to know?

SOC. Oh, how many of them there are, and how they all know it all, and—

CON. There be many Women that walk the Earth without leaning upon a staff, and each one saith: Behold, *I* am Minerva.

MIN. (*drops her shield and spear*). For Olympus' sake! (*A pause.*) And the Copyright Bill passed, too!

SOC. (*to Con.*). Will you ever forget that Boston girl?

CON. (*shaking his head*). When one hath seen a woman who saith *I* am a Goddess, one forgetteth it not.

MIN. (*sits C.*). You'll drive me crazy between you; Socrates, you used to be able to tell a straight story. You go on, or by the throne of Jupiter, Minerva means to know the reason why!

SOC. Let us proceed according to the Socratic method. You can ask questions.

MIN. (*sits.*) (*sarcastically*). I suppose, at least, you went to the Convention.

SOC. and CON. We did. (*They sigh.*)

MIN. What did they wear?

(*Soc. and Con. give each other a glance of intelli-*

gence, and, unseen of Minerva, draw from the folds of their garments copies of "The Ladies' Home Journal.")

Soc. (*hastily, to gain time*). They wore togas.

CON. (*referring to paper*). And mantles.

Soc. (*referring to paper*). And capes.

CON. And cut-away jackets.

Soc. And tall collars.

CON. And short skirts.

Soc. And vests.

CON. And mackintoshes.

Soc. And large sleeves.

CON. And Eton jackets.

Soc. And *tabliers en train*.

CON. And corsages of chiffon.

Soc. And *gants de Suède*.

MIN. (*putting her hands over her ears*). That's enough! That's enough! They must have looked like—well, like trophies. Didn't they any of them wear helmets?

Soc. (*secretly referring to "Journal"*). No, sailor hats.

CON. (*same business*). And toques.

Soc. And capotes.

MIN. And didn't any of them carry shields?

CON. (*same business*). No, fans.

Soc. And parasols.

CON. And bonbonnières.

MIN. I must say they haven't improved much in the

last few thousand years. I supposed they'd all have helmets and shields by this time. What did they talk about.

*(The subject of dress being done with, Soc. and Con. are visibly relieved, and conceal the "Journal" again in their robes.)*

Soc. *(wearily)*. Their speech was like the sands washed by the ocean of Truth. It dasheth upon them and leaveth no mark.

CON. *(wearily, but still politely)*. They named Names and they became other Things. As one saith, It is a Piano and behold it is a Folding Bed!

MIN. *(aside, sighing)*. There they go again. *(Aloud.)* What did they say? Whom did they name? What kind of a thing was it anyway?

Soc. *(sadly)*. They spoke of a stage where Woman assumes the Mask and Cothurnus.

MIN. Did they, really?

CON. *(sadly)*. They spoke of Music and they talked aloud that they might not catch the Sound thereof.

MIN. I'd like to have Apollo hear that!

Soc. The Creon of Sophocles hath become a woman.

CON. And she goeth about the streets with a Message and a Book of Writings of the Law; and She saith unto Men, "Sign"; and She compelleth them.

MIN. I *like* that. I always thought she ought to have more to do with the laws.

Soc. *(bitterly)*. Perhaps you'd like to have her casting ballots.

MIN. Why not? What's the harm?

CON. One seeth a Small, Round Thing and saith, "It is no harm." But when one toucheth it, it is a Bee Hive.

MIN. (*sarcastically*). I suppose that is what they said about it. Who was there, Socrates?

SOC. Maximilia R. Stantmore.

MIN. (*thoughtfully*.) Maximilia? Is she a Roman Empress?

SOC. No, she isn't. Nothing of the sort.

CON. (*speaks with frequent pauses*). And Charlotte was there. Of Boston. And the Wise of that City say, She knoweth it all. And if there be that she knoweth not, then it is not worth the Knowing.

MIN. I have heard that Boston is called the modern Athens. Have they an Acropolis.

CON. Yes. It goeth by the name of Bunker Hill.

MIN. (*thoughtfully*). The name is singular, but doubtless it hath its own meanings. And in this new Athens, do they reverence Minerva?

SOC. (*coldly*). Not particularly.

MIN. (*angrily*). Then Jupiter shall deal with the ungrateful who deny their tutelary goddess!

SOC. Second hand.

MIN. Well, second hand tutelary goddess then.

SOC. (*slowly*). They don't care a row of bent pins for Jupiter.

CON. The continent is wide and it stretcheth from Sea to Sea. But when a thing is of no Worth, they liken it to a Continental.

MIN. (*entirely overcome*). Well, I declare! (*A pause.*)  
(*Con. and Soc. are stolidly unhappy.*) What *do* they  
care about, anyway?

Soc. Talking.

CON. And they spoke of Buddha! As one speaketh  
of a New Thing, spake they of Buddha!

MIN. They seem to have gone back a good way.

CON. Yesterday is as To-morrow, and To-morrow is as  
to-day a fortnight, and there is no Time save Nirvana,  
and when Buddha planteth a Tree —

MIN. (*peevishly*). Oh, my! Don't *you* begin. That  
sort of thing just goes on forever once you get started!

Soc. And they search after Truth with much clatter,  
and when they have found her they go on to something  
else.

CON. And if two of them think the same Thoughts or  
say the same Words, it is an Error; and they cry aloud.

MIN. Mercy on us! It must be a worse racket than  
when Ganymede smashes all the tumblers!

Soc. And one saith this is Truth; and another saith  
It is not; and neither the one nor the other is right.

CON. And they wear Hats that be like men's and they  
are not warlike. And they say We would fight, and when  
they hear a Cannon Firecracker, they say It is a Fear-  
some Thing.

Soc. And they have acted Antigone!

CON. And they have fought lions!

Soc. And they have condemned man.

CON. And they have invented Literature!

MIN. (*sits*). And do they not sew on buttons? Or knit stockings? Or bake puddings? Or wheel the perambulator?

SOC. (*impatiently*). No, No, No!

CON. When one seeth strange things, It is a Reform. Water aboundeth in Nature, but Man hath invented a Spigot.

MIN. (*becoming depressed*). Then it is all true — all those reports I heard? Things are very much changed.

SOC. Changed is no word for it.

MIN. (*with some hesitation*). I don't suppose there is anything I could teach them how to do.

SOC. (*with conviction*). Nothing.

MIN. (*laying aside her spear and shield and sinking into an attitude of dejection*). (*Tableau.*) I don't know what there is left for me, I'm sure. I've always thought I was leading the strong-minded women just as I used to do — in Greece and Rome — only I was too busy to go and see about it. I meant to, sometime.

SOC. You put it off too long.

MIN. What would you advise me to do now? Is there anything you can think of, having just been there, that they don't do, that I could take up, so as to show that the older civilization was superior, after all?

SOC. I don't think of anything. Truth is no longer hidden. She hath become the Fashion.

CON. When one goeth too hastily to the Van, one sendeth him back to the Rear that he may be busy. And Men say He picketh up Dropped Stitches.



MIN. (*suddenly to Con.*) You give me an idea. Generally I must say, I don't get many ideas from what you say. It sounds like — well, like Culture, of course, but it is not practical. This time you are practical. (*Rises.*) I can learn to sew.

SOC. (*astonished*). And go out by the day? Oh, no!

MIN. And to knit.

CON. (*pleasantly*). When a Thing hath Three Sides and one hasteneth from one to the other, it is a Stocking.

MIN. And to cook. (*The philosophers look doubtful and shake their heads.*) Why, wouldn't you?

SOC. I would wait a while. Truth lieth not always open to a beginner.

CON. And the Wise eat thereof and are sad.

MIN. I could begin with you, Socrates (*looks at him critically*). I see you've fastened your robe with a shoe string where the button's off.

SOC. (*sadly*). Yes, Xantippe was never any hand to sew on buttons.

CON. When a Thing hath Four Holes and it is difficult to find one, it is usually a Button.

MIN. (*sits, goes through knitting motions clumsily with her spear*). I could get the Fates to lend me some yarn and set it up for me. (*The Philosophers watch her in silence for a few moments, a beam of satisfaction growing upon their faces.*)

SOC. You look very nice doing that. Truth and Domesticity are the Cult wherein Woman findeth herself.

CON. When one layeth aside the Spear for the Needle, One saith It is a Lady.

MIN. (*with a change of manner, sharply*). I don't know that I have laid it aside. I always intend to be able to hold my own. (*Picks up her shield.*) I hate to hear men talk that way.

CON. (*mildly*). When a Feeble Foot findeth the Treadle we say It is in its Place.

SOC. Disturbance and Knowledge are for Man, and the Sphere of Women floats in the aether of Retirement.

MIN. (*rising*). That is enough! If you are going back to that sort of thing, it settles it! You men will all be too glad to talk that way!

(*The philosophers perceive their mistake.*)

SOC. (*meekly*). I suppose we are glad to have the chance to talk any way.

MIN. (*with sudden inspiration*). I have another plan. It is a great one! (*She assumes her arms.*) It is beyond what I dreamed of. I shall still lead the van! (*She steps up on a sort of pedestal at one side of the arbor. They watch her breathlessly.*) I will show Woman of the Nineteenth Century that Minerva is still Learning that Athene is still Wisdom! That she lives not in the effete, nor crumbles amid the ruins of the old world. The laughter of Olympus sounds in my ears, but I heed it not. I shall go —

SOC. and CON. (*eagerly*). You shall go —

MIN. (*with an heroic gesture*). To Boston.

(*Tableau. Minerva with her shield and raised spear. Confucius and Socrates on either side in attitudes of awed despair.*)

CURTAIN.



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